
ANNUAL REPORT

Toronto Parent-Child Mother Goose Program

2016 - 2017

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720 Bathurst Street, Suite 500A, Toronto, Ontario M5S 2R4

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Parent-Child Mother Goose Program 30th Anniversary

Our program originated in Toronto in 1984 as The Mother Goose Enrichment Program, developed by Barry Dickson and Joan Bodger and offered under the auspices of the Children's Aid Society as an early intervention program. Katherine Grier and Celia Lottridge were invited to be part of that program. In 1986 after the pilot project ended, Katherine and Celia took the program out into the community as The Parent Child Mother Goose Program. It was incorporated in 1986 and became a registered charity in 1987.

The program is a joyful group experience for parents and their babies or two-to-four-year-olds. If vulnerable, well-meaning parents do not emotionally bond or expressively communicate with their young children, the parent-child relationships and the children's futures can be compromised. The Parent-Child Mother Goose Program[®] intervenes to prevent this outcome with a physically close and interactive program in which parents and children learn to share the power and pleasure of oral rhymes, songs, and stories. The approach is backed by decades of research, yet is so simple and natural that parents effortlessly gain the skills and confidence that foster healthy relationships during their children's crucial early years, and their children acquire a foundation for lifelong emotional, physical, and cognitive development.

All children's early experiences mold their brains, and the primary caregiver provides most of those experiences. The caregiver's choice of words, tone of voice, gestures, facial expressions, holding, and cuddling lay the neurological foundation for the child's lifelong emotional, physical, and cognitive health.

Because the peaks in a child's brain development for literacy, numeracy, social skills and emotional control all occur from ages one to three, the quality of the primary caregiver's responsiveness is the most crucial element in this process, and the changes to a child's brain around this period are unlikely to be reversed. As a result, the return on investment during and close to this period is greater than for any other time in a person's life.

Because Parent-Child Mother Goose initiated a training and certification process for Parent-Child Mother Goose Program teachers nation-wide and internationally 20 years ago, the organization has enabled Parent-Child Mother Goose programs for many thousands of parents, babies and young children in every province in Canada as well as Australia, China, United States, Iran, and Ecuador. Program languages include Indigenous languages, English, French, Spanish, Somali, Farsi, Mandarin, and ASL. Happy 30th Anniversary!

Principal Activities 2016 - 2017

- 6 PCMG programs to underserved Toronto communities: Lakeshore, Elmbank Infant, Elmbank 2-4, Parkdale, Malvern, and Somali
- 18 PCMG Teacher Training Workshops in Toronto and across Canada to train PCMG teachers for agencies that wish to provide PCMG programs in their own communities
- 280 books and disks for PCMG program providers and families across Canada and abroad
- Advocacy and partnership with governmental and non-governmental organizations

Programs

Highlights from the Field

Please note that since some stories are very personal, some potentially identifying features, including the names of the programs, have been omitted from these excerpts from teachers' end-of-term reports and participant questionnaires in order to preserve confidentiality. Thank you, all, for the great information!!

A 19-month-old boy, who was the eldest of the children in one program, walked in with his grandmother, took off his coat, settled down on the mat and began to recite the rhyme *There is a Cobbler on our Street* with all the actions! Later in the program he led everyone in reciting and doing the actions for *Three Little Monkeys*.

The same little boy on another occasion, as everyone was coming to join in the circle, went up to a little girl. He looked her in the face, then bent down, touched the floor with his hand and put his thumb up to her forehead. The teacher said that she thought he was beginning *The Moon is Round*, but his mother said no with a look of delight and explained that that was what they do at their Temple to greet people.

A mother who was new to the program told how she had walked from place to place in Somalia to get away from the civil war, ending up in Kenya. She is so grateful to be able to live here and come to our program.

Another family who had just arrived in Canada came to a program with their five children of varying ages, who were not yet enrolled in school. Coming to the program was a boon for this family socially and emotionally, and gave them the chance to start learning English and accessing local services.

One newcomer family was a single mother with twin babies, who are alone in Canada and were extremely quiet at the start of the program. Over the course of the term, the babies became actively engaged with their mother and the other participants, following along with the rhymes. Mother and children feel very comfortable now in the group.

In one group, there were two families in which the children had taken instantly to the program and soon learned the rhymes, but the mothers seemed unengaged. As time went on, the mothers began to look forward to the program themselves, started arriving earlier, and talked about how much the program has meant to them.

One child was uncomfortable being tickled during the grandfather clock rhyme and left the circle frowning. The teachers invited her back and modified the rhyme to a kissing clock. She returned to the circle. Now at the end of the term, she enjoys being tickled!

In another group, one mother and child faced the attachment challenge that the child was unable to be without his mother for a second and would pull her around to wherever he wanted to go, which became very wearying and concerning for the mother. By the end of the term, when the mother was more relaxed and interactive with her child, the child was able to move about without her.

One mother reported hearing her older son sing to her baby and watched them connect through the Mother Goose material. She also hears her husband sing and rhyme at home with the baby, and appreciated how the material she learned had permeated their home life. She also reported that the “rhymes help you to keep your mind” and appreciated the slower pace of the program as compared to other programs..

In one program, there was a mother who had brought her first baby to the program and now had two preschoolers. She has said that learning our repertoire of rhymes and songs has been a “game changer” at home. When things get bumpy, using the rhymes and songs is better for her sanity than having just one child!

In another program, a father and mother brought their son to the program while they were both looking for work. The mother reported happily that now when her son begins to feel grumpy or bored, he says, “Sing, mommy, sing!” And they all sing together.

There is a family that had a second child after 20 years and now they are realizing that they missed this experience with their first son. Now that the mother is going to work, the father brings the little boy to experience the rhymes together.

QUOTES FROM PROGRAM PARTICIPANTS

- I’m learning the stories myself, so I can tell them at home.
- We look forward to the program and have learned a lot of new rhymes, songs, and stories.
- The chance to socialize and communicate with others is something we don’t otherwise have.
- It is good for my son to have the chance to interact with a bigger crowd. He learns songs that give him an easy way to communicate with everyone.
- Listening to the stories is very calming and we can tell them to our children at home.

- Your team does an amazing job. Your dedication has made an impact on our lives.
- It feels good to spend time “outside” and with other parents.
- The program makes the bonding and connection with my son better. I like the lessons that I draw from some of the stories and apply to everyday living.
- I’m so glad my child has the chance to meet and play with other kids. We have a sense of community here.
- I really enjoy watching how my child reacts to the stories, and to talking about what they might mean.
- My child can participate in new activities and socialize with others.
- The stories help me a lot with imagination.
- The program helps with separation anxiety, and the repetition helps the baby learn quickly.
- I like to model listening for my child.
- This program is so unique and important, and it is crucial for parents that it is free.
- My child and I enjoy each other in song.
- We especially like the language and social skills. The stories give me new ideas.
- I appreciate the bonding, the language development, and the fun!

Program Funding

The majority of the direct costs of our Lakeshore, Parkdale and two Elmbank Programs were funded by the City of Toronto’s Community Services Partnership.

The direct costs of our bilingual Somali Program were funded by Etobicoke Brighter Futures Coalition.

Our Malvern Program was funded by Catherine and Maxwell Meighen Foundation, Tippet Foundation, St. Andrew’s Charitable Foundation, and Ben and Hilda Katz Foundation.

All other funding for operational expenses and indirect program costs were from the private sector (please see Donors section at the end of this report) or our social enterprise. Thank you!

Program Statistics

The 274 adults and 298 children registered in our directly delivered Parent-Child Mother Goose programs in Toronto this year were culturally diverse and many shared rhymes and stories from their mother tongues. Program participants’ cultures and languages included: Albanian, Amharic, Arabic, Bengali, Bargla, Bosnian, Cantonese, Croatian, Dari, Edo, Eritrean, Ethiopian, Farsi, French, German, Greek, Gujarati, Hindi, Ibo, Ilocano (Philippines), Japanese, Kutchi, Mandarin, Nepali, Pari (Sudan), Pashtu, Polish, Portuguese, Punjabi, Russian, Somali, Spanish, Sudanese, Swiss German, Tagalog, Telugu, Tigrinia, Tamil, and Tibetan.

Social Enterprise Activities

Our workshops, books and disks are offered as a service to agencies and individuals anywhere in the world who are interested in PCMG, with the ultimate goal of disseminating the PCMG program and its methods and benefits as widely as possible. In a good year, our social enterprise is a small source of revenue to support PCMG programs and operations.

PCMG Teacher Training Workshops

Teacher training workshops create new Mother Goose teachers, expand and strengthen the network of Mother Goose programs, and help to maintain the standards of programs. We are exploring ways to promote our trainings, including the development of our database's marketing and communications capacity. PCMG delivered 18 teacher training workshops in 2016-2017 in Alberta, British Columbia, New Brunswick, Newfoundland, Ontario, and Quebec, of which three were in-house in Toronto.

Book and Disk Sales

Our most popular books were *The Moon is Round* and *Ten Small Tales*, followed by *Zoom, Zoom, Zoom*. The most popular disks were *A Smooth Road* and the *Sally Go Round the Sun* and *Sally Go Round the Moon* duo.

Partnerships

Native Child and Family Services Toronto

We are delighted to report that the customized Aboriginal Parent-Child Mother Goose Program that we developed at Native Child and Family Services Toronto in 2014-2016 is now independently taught by two Native Child and Family early childhood education staff. Both have taken our teacher training workshop and one apprenticed in the first year of the program with Ruth Danziger and Velrina Alexander.

Etobicoke Brighter Futures Coalition

As a long-time member of the outstanding EBFC, who fund our Somali PCMG Program, we participate in the EBFC evaluation and coordination committees and meetings.

National Program and Training Committee

The Program & Training Committee are a national volunteer group responsible for the policy and standards of the Parent-Child Mother Goose programs and teacher training workshops. We are very grateful to the dedicated women who do the invaluable work of maintaining the integrity of our programs and workshops.

Early Child Education Colleges

PCMG once again provided students from ECE and Child Care degree programs the opportunity to gain exceptional experience and knowledge as volunteer childcare assistants in our PCMG programs. A student commits to a minimum of 10 weeks in order to maintain continuity in the program, and receives a PCMG childcare certificate if he or she completes 30 weeks. Thank you to our wonderful ECE students!

Midaynta Community Services

We are grateful to partner with Midaynta for our bilingual Somali Program. Midaynta Executive Director Mahad Yusuf offers highly knowledgeable support and promotes the program with families through Somali Immigrant Aid, where the parents study English.

Sojourn House for Refugees

Sojourn House is a temporary home for newly arrived refugees from all over the world. It has offered settlement services and programs since 1987. Happy 30th to Sojourn House!

Family Resource Agencies

The Parent-Child Mother Goose Program is also offered throughout the Greater Toronto Area by many other teachers who have taken our teacher training workshops and become certified. These teachers work with a variety of family resource agencies, including the following:

- Afghan Women's Organization
- Birchmount Bluffs Neighbourhood Centre
- Blue Hills Child and Family Centre
- Centre for Immigrant and Community Services
- Davenport Perth Neighbourhood and Community Health Centre
- Parkdale High Park OEYC (Earls court-Creche Child Development Institute),
- Milton Community Resource Centre
- Ministry of Education
- Oakville Parent-Child Centre
- The Chartwell House Early Learning Centre
- YWCA Durham
- OEYC Today's Family
- Story Planet
- East York/East Toronto Family Resources
- Regent Park Community Health Centre
- Region of Peel
- Mississauga Parent-Child Resource Centres
- Mothercraft/Breaking the Cycle
- York Child Development & Family Services
- Native Child & Family Services
- Parent Resources
- OEYC Stoney Creek
- OEYC Today's Family
- OEYC Markham Family Day Care Services
- OEYC York North
- Oakville Parent-Child Centre
- YWCA Durham OEYC

Memberships

PCMG is a member of the Canadian Association of Family Resource Programs (FRP Canada), Storytellers of Canada, Etobicoke Brighter Futures Coalition, Social Planning Toronto, the Centre for Social Innovation, and Sick Kids Hospital Infant Mental Health Promotion.

Special Mention

Parent-Child Mother Goose Program in Australia

With a history of 15 years, PCMG is thriving in Australia and has been certified by the government of Australia as an evidence-based program. We received this lovely message from Jenny Tuck, who visited us in Toronto this year:

Dear Susan and all Canadian Geese,

Parent-Child Mother Goose Australia sends warmest congratulations on the occasion of the 30th Anniversary of P-CMG. We are thrilled and excited for you all.

We are also thankful that you developed this wonderful program as we are so very passionate about P-CMG in Australia. We are going from strength to strength here. During 2017 we ran 8 trainings in 3 states (provinces). We have a new improved website to which we are adding new material constantly. Furthermore we produced our own P-CMG DVD in 2016.

I was thrilled to meet Susan, Sarah and Ruth in August at the Toronto Office and we plan to keep in contact. P-CMGA are pleased to send you a gift of a book titled "Wise Women of the Dreamtime". This book is a collection of indigenous stories from the Aboriginal People of Australia.

*Very best wishes and congratulations from all the Geese Down Under,
Jenny Tuck
Treasurer, P-CMGA Committee and Trainer*

1001 Friday Nights of Storytelling Fundraiser

Every Friday night for the last 39 years, storytellers have gathered in downtown Toronto for 1001 Friday Nights of Storytelling, an open evening of oral stories. Once again this year Pat Bisset organized one of their gatherings as a benefit for PCMG, raising more than \$300. Thanks a million to Pat Bisset, the storytellers, and their donors!

New Parent-Child Mother Goose Program for Refugees

In our partnership with Sojourn House, we have an Ontario Multicultural Community Capacity Grant to offer a new Parent-Child Mother Goose program for refugees at Sojourn House that will be taught by our Program Director Ruth Danziger and our bilingual Eritrean teacher Leeya Solomon.

Oxford Elgin Child and Youth Centre Parent-Child Mother Goose Programs

Congratulations to the Oxford County PCMG programs on their 20th Anniversary! OECYC has offered PCMG in the rural communities of Brooksdale, Harrington, Embro, Kintore, Thamesford, Mount Elgin, Brownsville, Norwich, Burgessville, Otterville, Oxford Centre, Innerkip, Plattsville, Princeton, Hickson, Tavistock, and Springford.

Partnering with Indigenous Communities

With the help of the Department of Indigenous and Northern Affairs and Health Canada, PCMG is reaching out to First Nations communities in Ontario and across Canada. Health Canada will distribute information about Parent-Child Mother Goose Program to frontline workers in remote Indigenous communities to acquaint them with our program and training, and we will follow up with a 45-minute webinar.

We have provided partnership for a proposal to Aboriginal Healing and Wellness Strategy, Community and Developmental Services, Ministry of Community and Social Services, for a project in Mishkeegogamang First Nation (Osnaburgh), which would include PCMG teacher training workshops at the planned Indigenous Strength Based Family Treatment Centre in their community.

We have developed partnerships with M'Chigeeng First Nation (Manitoulin Island), Sandy Lake First Nation, and Kitchenuhmaykoosib Inninuwug (Big Trout Lake) First Nation for a proposal to do four teacher training workshops and deliver 30-week programs in each of the three communities over two years in in 2018-2020. An Indigenous PCMG teacher from Native Child and Family Toronto will take part in the teacher training, and the manager of the culture department at the Native Canadian Centre of Toronto will act as cultural consultant on the project and workshops.

Thank you to our Contributors!

The Parent-Child Mother Goose Program extends heartfelt thanks to the creative and dedicated individuals who brought about delivery of PCMG programs and workshops to the community!

Program Director Ruth Danziger
Office and Workshops Manager Sarah Pinder

Program Teachers:

Sarah Abusarar
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Pat Bisset
Ruth Danziger
Batun Farah
Lynda Howes

Heejo Yoon
Falis Kediye
Maria del Carmen Ordonez
Leeya Solomon
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Childcare Assistants:

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Seema Walia
Gail Miller
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Khadijah Mohammed

ECE Volunteers:

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Rosa Blanco-Pena, Humber College

Apprentices:

Francesca Rufino
Gail Miller

Teacher Training

Workshop Facilitators:

Heather Boonstra
Ruth Danziger
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Kim Heatherington
Beth Hutchinson

Celia Lottridge
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Moire Porter
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And a huge thank you to our dedicated **Board of Directors!**

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Donors

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2016-2017 Major Funders

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2016-2017 Donors in Kind

- BoardMatch
- Elmbank Community Centre
- Parkdale Community Health Centre
- Native Child and Family Services Toronto
- Salesforce.com
- TechSoup
- Toronto Community Housing Corporation
- Toronto Public Library, Albion Branch
- Toronto Public Library, Malvern Branch
- WholeNote Media

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Toronto Parent-Child Mother Goose Program

