

Mother Goose on the Loose

*Cook Elementary School
Syracuse, Utah*

The goal for Cook Elementary School was to engage parents of young children in literacy and math strategies to promote school readiness. A subcommittee of the Action Team for Partnerships (ATP) looked to previous collections of *Promising Partnership Practices* and the Utah Family Reading Project for ideas. They decided to adapt Mother Goose on the Loose for their preschool audience.

Ninety families with children ranging in age from birth to five years old attended the evening event. Families rotated through nursery rhyme stations that provided take home ideas and activities to support preschool children's school readiness skills in reading and math. Thirty-five volunteers facilitated the stations, which included:

- Registration: Mother Goose greeted all participants. Families received a book bag, a children's book of their choice, a developmental flip chart, a packet of learning activities, and an invitation for four year olds to attend four additional evening events.
- Diddle Diddle Dumpling: Children sorted socks on a clothesline, played a picture matching game, and dressed up according to directions in a listening activity.
- Fish Alive: Children received a bracelet for their right hands, and then completed a counting and graphing activity using fish crackers.
- Old Mother Hubbard: Children matched dogs with the correct number of corresponding dog bones.
- Humpty Dumpty: Children practiced fine motor skills by using nesting eggs in a relay race and played a matching game.
- Jack Be Nimble: Children sorted candles by size and played a listening and gross motor game to jump over the candlesticks.
- Twinkle, Twinkle: Children laced up a paper star and ate star-shaped cookies.
- ABC Tumble Down D: Children used clay to shape the first letter of their name and played tracing games. Each child received a laminated card with his/her name on it in dotted lines to practice tracing at home.
- Sing a Rhyme: A teacher led children and their parents in finger plays and acting out nursery rhymes.
- Make a Book of Rhymes: Families worked together to make their own activity book of 30 nursery rhymes.
- I Saw Three Ships: Children made ships from tangram shapes and used wooden boats in movement and listening activities.

“The exciting part about Mother Goose on the Loose was the team members' ownership of the activity. I suggested the idea, and then they just ran with it. We expect double the numbers next year,” stated the principal.

One hundred percent of the four-year-olds and their families who attended Mother Goose on the Loose returned for additional evening sessions. The four sessions focused on:

- ABC & 123: Children participated in an activity while parents received training in how to conduct literacy and numeracy activities at home. Then, the children and their parents played literacy and numeracy games together at six stations.
- Communication: Each child received a vision and hearing screening. Families

made puppets and rotated to three activities focused on enhancing vocabulary.

- **Readiness & Environmental Learning:** Parents and their children visited stations where they practiced using everyday experiences as a time for learning. Parents received information on the signs of school readiness and how to help their children become ready for kindergarten.
- **Celebration of the Child:** Families made pancakes shaped like letters, graphed M&M's, sorted candies, and made their own library shelf to take home. The county librarian presented information about library programs during the summer. Each child received a six-pack of books to put on their new shelf.

This year, Mother Goose on the Loose was supported by a grant from Scholastic Books. The 35 volunteers who staffed the stations and worked with the young children came from local faith-based youth groups.

Plans for next year's Mother Goose on the Loose are underway. The theme will be fairy tales and the PTA will donate the free books they receive from the book fair to the participants. The Action Team for Partnerships has committed to writing three year's worth of activities so that families will participate in new activities each year.

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