

Hustle Hoosh!

• Wilma Ellersiek, translated by Kundry Willwerth

The following is an excerpt from the book *Dancing Hand—Trotting Pony*, recently published by WECAN. The first half of the book is devoted to games for hands, fists, and fingers, which bring dexterity and flexibility into this most important realm for the development of language and thinking in later years. Renate Long-Breipohl points out the manifold benefits of such games in her article in this issue.

The second half of the book portrays many different animals in a series of verses, songs, and gesture games, some for hands only, some for the whole body. One of these is reprinted in full below.

Ellersiek's approach to the animal world has a very rare and special quality. As Ingrid Weidenfeld points out in her introduction to this section, "the animals

are shown through play, acting in their natural way. They never begin to speak; never move in ways they would not be able to move; never are they portrayed as quasi-human." Thus, she says, "the children learn and experience, through imitation, something characteristic about the animal portrayed through play." They experience the true, living essence of the animal, rather than an intellectual description or emotional interpretation.

Through Lyn and Kundry Willwerth's devoted work of translation and editing, these games have now been made available in English. WECAN is very pleased to present them in the hope that they will inspire many joyful hours of play and fun, while bringing forces of life and health to the children.

Hustle Hoosh!

Hand Gesture Game

FROM HER HOUSE PEEPS THE MOUSE: FEEP – FEEP!

HUSTLES: HOOSH – HOOSH – HOOSH – HOOSH!

FINDS A LITTLE NUT:

P P P P P P P! NIBBLES THE MOUSE.

P P P P P P P! NIBBLE – NIBBLE – NOUSE.

FEEP! FEEP!

HUSTLES: HOOSH – HOOSH – HOOSH – HOOSH!

FINDS A LITTLE ROOT:

T T T T T T T! GNAWS THE MOUSE.

T T T T T T T! NUBBA – NUBBA – NOUSE.

IN THE FOREST IT GOES: CRACK!

HOOSH – HOOSH: SHE RUNS BACK! FEEP!

TEXT:

1 From her house

2 peeps the mouse:



3 feep – feep!
left right

4 Hustles: hoosh – hoosh –
↑ ↗ ↖
 hoosh – hoosh!
 ↗ ↖

HAND GESTURES:

1 Lay your rounded left hand on your right thigh, close to your body, palm down. With your right hand, put your pointer and middle finger on top of your thumb, your fingertips extend slightly over your thumb tip, forming the "mouse's nose." Hide the little nose under your rounded left hand.

2 At "peeps," the little nose suddenly appears from under the "mouse hole," the rounded left hand.

3 The little mouse looks left and right at: "feep – feep."

4 At "hustle," the little mouse leaves its hole and runs quickly along a short stretch of your thigh toward your knee. Then he stops suddenly. At each "hustle" or "hoosh," again move him quickly forward, but in changing directions, so that the mouse runs in zigzags towards your knee. At your knee, stop the movement again. While the mouse hustles, dissolve unnoticed the mouse hole gesture of your left hand.

5 Finds a little nut:

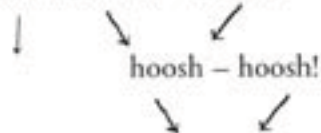
6 P p p p p p p!
nibbles the mouse.

P p p p p p p!
Nibble – nibble – nouse.

7 Feep! Feep!



8 Hustles: hoosh – hoosh –



5 At the word “finds,” lightly press the little nose down into the ground (your right knee.)

6 With your pointer and middle finger tap with quick, tiny, rhythmic movements on the tip of your thumb. This movement shows the nibbling of the mouse. For the “ppppppp” pucker your lips as if giving a kiss, opening and closing your lips very fast while sucking in the air a little. This creates a nibbling noise. Movements of the “mouse” should be coordinated with the sounds. Take a brief break at the end of each text line.

7 The little mouse looks left and right, and each time he does he calls “feep!”

8 Suddenly the little mouse hustles back to the left, running along the inside of your thigh, but still close to your knee. (Don’t turn your “mouse hand,” the little nose is always pointed to the children.) Then stop suddenly. Run him zigzag along your thigh toward your body. Stop suddenly.

9 Finds a little root:

∨ ∨ ∨

10 T t t t t t t!

gnaws the mouse.

T t t t t t t!

Nubba – nubba – nouse.

11 In the forest it goes:

12 Crack!

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13 Hoosh – hoosh: she runs back!

14 Feep!

9 Bend your pointer and middle fingers so that they can scratch your thigh or other surface. Also bend your thumb. This gesture suggests the “teeth of the little mouse.” Scratch the surface at each “∨.”

10 Rhythmically gnaw an imaginary root with your “mouse teeth.” In other words, the finger nails scratch on the support surface. To make a gnawing sound, press your tongue against the roof of your mouth directly behind the upper teeth. Suck in the air a little, and very quickly move your tongue back and forth from the roof of your mouth. Pause at the end of each line.

11 Speak the text: “in the forest it goes” quickly, softly, well articulated, and at the same pitch.

12 Suddenly call out short and high: “Crack!” tapping your thigh quickly with your left pointer. This “crack” is an acorn which has fallen down.

13 The little mouse disappears behind your back in zigzag. Take a brief pause.

14 The mouse nose appears once more at “feep.” It looks boldly around the corner, then disappears again behind your back.