

Excerpts from *Singing and Speaking the Child into Life*

— Susan Weber, Nancy Macalaster, and Jane Swain

The new WECAN publication, *Singing and Speaking the Child into Life*, comes from Susan Weber, Nancy Macalaster, and Jane Swain of Sophia's Hearth. This compilation of verses, songs, and singing games is particularly intended for use with very young children under three.

Every classroom, as well as every parent with children at home, needs lovely lullabies. This one, originally published in Nancy Foster's book *Let Us Form a Ring*, is a beautiful picture of stars as daisies in the heavenly nighttime meadow that fall to earth by day to appear as earthly flowers. This lullaby is well suited for use wherever there is a sleepy child.

The section "Lap Games and Jog-Alongs" offers games that are always great fun for tiny children. They love to

Frank Dempster Sherman

Traditional



1. At eve - ning when I go ___ to bed, I see the
2. And of - ten when I'm dream - ing so A - cross the
3. For when at mor - ning I ___ a - rise There's not a



stars shine o - ver head, They are the lit - tle
sky the moon_ will go, She is a la - dy
star left in ___ the skies; She's picked them all and



dai - sies white, That dot the mead - ow of ___ the night.
sweet and fair Who comes to ga - ther dai - sies there.
dropped them down In - to the mead - ows of ___ the town.

Singing and Speaking the Child into Life at 31

be bounced about. One could picture the following “Father and Mother and Uncle John” with the child sitting on the adult’s lap, facing in. The child would be rhythmically bounced straight up and down for the first two lines, then tipped to one side on the third line, to the opposite side with the fourth line, and then resume steady bouncing on the last line.

Father and Mother and Uncle John	<i>Rhythmic bouncing up and down</i>
Went to town, one by one	<i>Continue bouncing</i>
Father fell off.	<i>Tip child to one side</i>
Mother fell off.	<i>Tip child to the other side</i>
But Uncle John went on and on and on.	<i>Resume regular bouncing</i>

In the classroom at circle time, one could imagine this transformed into a hand gesture game. Begin with hand lightly closed into a fist.

Father and	<i>Stick up thumb and then fold back down</i>
Mother and	<i>Stick up pinkie finger and then fold back down</i>
Uncle John	<i>Stick up three central fingers then fold down</i>
Went	<i>Repeat with thumb as done with “Father”</i>
To town	<i>Repeat as with pinkie as done with “Mother”</i>
One by one	<i>Repeat as with “Uncle John”</i>
Father fell off	<i>Stick up thumb and then hide</i>
Mother fell off	<i>Stick up pinkie and then hide</i>
But Uncle John went on and on and on	<i>Stick up three central fingers and lift hand rhythmically up and down with the words.</i>

The last jog-along is also a song. One can imagine the little child on the lap being moved rhythmically to the song, one bounce on each quarter note. This also lends itself to use as a trotting song during a circle time. The tempo begins somewhat quickly, slows, and then picks up tempo again, only to end in a quick—and laugh-inducing—“Whoa, Joe!”

Trot old Joe, Trot old Joe, You trot bet-ter'n a-ny horse I know.

Trot old Joe, Trot old Joe,

You're the best horse in the coun-try, oh. Whoa, Joe!

from *Singing and Speaking the Child into Life* at 60

Resources:

- Susan Weber, Nancy Macalaster, and Jane Swain, *Singing and Speaking the Child into Life*, (WECAN 2018).
- Nancy Foster, *Let Us Form a Ring* (Silver Spring, Maryland: Acorn Hill, 2000).

Susan Weber, Nancy Macalaster, and Jane Swain are the authors of *Singing and Speaking the Child into Life*. Susan is the Director of Sophia’s Hearth Family Center, at which Jane is Associate Director of Teacher Education. Nancy is a graduate of the Center’s professional development course for early childhood professionals, “The Child and the Family in the First Three Years,” and has completed advanced training at the Pikler Institute in Budapest, Hungary. Visit Sophia’s Hearth at sophiashearth.org.