FINGERPLAYS, NURSERY RHYMES,
AND BODY MOVEMENTS

Why are they worthwhile?
They direct a child’s attention and encourage imitation.
They usually quiet children.
They help children become more aware and accepting of themselves as persons - physically, emotionally, and socially.
They help children become more aware and accepting of other people and, thus, encourage another perspective taking.
They are a means to encourage interaction in some children.
They help children realize we are all alike in some ways and different in other ways.
They encourage imitation in children who do not imitate.
They can be used for children to learn making choices as to a preferred fingerplay, rhyme, song (e.g. a child could select one from two to four pictured choices).
They are melodic. Even a nonverbal child will rock to a favorite melody.
They are generally repetitive and predictable.
They can be used to support a child with a phonologic or dyspraxic speech disability to slow down his/her rate of speech so that he/she can more easily move through particular articulatory motor movements and segment multi-syllabic words.
They expose children to colorful, creative language.
Not only do children enjoy them, but most adults enjoy them, too.

* Don’t be afraid to ham it up. Kids love it when you do.
* Allow a child to lead and ask what fingerplay(s) you or another child would like.
* Always support with visuals (e.g. finger and hand gestures, manual signs, exaggerated facial expressions, finger puppets, pictures).
* Make props available throughout the day so that children can re-enact them with their peers and adults.

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August, 2012