

CHILDREN'S SONGS AROUND THE WORLD

by Catherine Slonecki, M. S.

1. CIELITO LINDO - Mexico

Any child (or adult) will enjoy the English/Spanish version of this familiar Mexican folksong about a beautiful girl. Young children can perform a simple patty cake with a partner to this song. They slap knees, clap hands, and alternately clap their partner's right and left hands. Older children can try this simple Mexican partner dance.

STEPS

A. 4 measures: Partner on the left begins with right foot; the partner on the right begins with the left foot. They walk three steps, and clap their hands together three times while facing each other. Perform in opposite direction, then repeat entire sequence.

B. 4 measures: Partners join hands and step together, apart, together, and clap their hands together three times. Repeat this pattern.

Repeat sequence throughout song.

LYRIC

From mountains high under starry skies
Comes my lovely Cielito Lindo.
Thru the gate where the dancers wait
Come my laughing Cielito Lindo.

Chorus

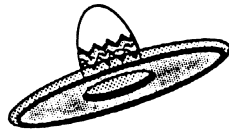
Ay, ay, ay, ay!
No time for sadness,
When music meets with her dancing feet
She will fill our days up with gladness.

De la Sierra morena
Vienen bajando Cielito Lindo.
Un par de ojitos negros
Cielito Lindo de contrabando.

Chorus

Ay, ay, ay, ay!
Canta y no llores.
Porque cantando se alegran
Cielito Lindo que a mi me tocan.

Repeat Chorus



2. JAMAICA FAREWELL - Jamaica

A favorite movement activity in the islands is the Limbo. Children line up single file in back of a pole that's on a stand or held by other children. One at a time, they lean back far enough to walk under the pole without touching it, the floor, or falling. When everyone has had a turn, the pole is progressively lowered. Children waiting in line should clap and sway.

LYRIC

Down the way where the palm trees sway,
And the sun shines brightly on the mountaintop.
I took a trip on a sailing ship,
And when I reached Jamaica, I made a stop.

Chorus

But I'm sad to say, I'm on my way.
Won't be back for many a day.
My heart is down, my head is turning around.
I had to leave a little girl in Kingston town.
Sounds of laughter everywhere.
And the dancing girls swaying to and fro.
I must declare my heart is there
Though I've been from Maine to Mexico.

Repeat chorus 2x; then repeat verse 1 and chorus.

3. SAMBALELE - Brazil

Your children will have fun forming a Brazilian Conga line by putting their hands on the waist of the person in front of them and snaking around the room. Young children may perform this without using special steps.

Steps: A- Step left, right, left, kick right foot.
B- Step right, left, right, kick left foot.

LYRIC

Sambalele missed the party.
Said he was not feeling hearty.
But when our feet started tapping,
He'd had enough of his napping.

Chorus

Samba, samba, samba, o-le!
Step here behind me and do as I say.
Samba, samba, samba this way.
Soon you'll be wanting to dance it all day.

Sambalele, come and sing it.
Soon you'll be ready to swing it
Just clap your hands to the music,
Then you'll be ready to dance it.

Repeat chorus, then repeat verse 1 and chorus as needed.

4. O DESAYO - Southwest Africa

African music is very rhythmic and relies on pulsating drumbeats. Children will enjoy playing rhythm instruments along with this greeting and farewell song from Southwestern Africa. They may also pantomime the action words in this song.

Action Words O, Desayo (hello and goodbye), menina (little girl), rain, bright, shiny, sunny day, get-together, sing, dance, drink, stay for dinner, rowing, winding stream.

LYRIC

Chorus

O, desayo! O, desayo!
O, desayo! Menina
O, desayo!

The rain is over, it's bright and shiny weather.
O, desayo!
Fine and sunny day for a get-together.
O, desayo!

Repeat Chorus

Sing a song and then, dance a while and then,
Drink a cup and then, stay for dinner then.
Off we go say goodbye.
We've got to say goodbye.

Repeat Chorus

Rowing down the winding stream.
Rowing down the winding stream.
Rowing down the winding stream. Menina.
Rowing down the winding stream

Repeat Chorus as needed.



5. TAFFTA HINDI - Northern Africa

Children can perform a simple Arabian dance as they listen to this song about a peddler selling his wares.

A. 2 measures: Beginning in a line, step with the right foot to the right side. The left foot crosses in front of the right with a slight swing up and touches down. Keep knees and body relaxed. Repeat. (Younger children may only perform this step.)

B. 2 measures: With feet together, bend knees to the left. Straighten knees to the center with a sharp motion. Repeat.

Repeat as needed throughout the song.

LYRIC

Come and buy! Come and buy!
Here's the peddler, Taffta Hindi.
He has things for us to wear.
From your doorways come and bargain
For his silks and laces rare!
From your doorways come and bargain
For his silks and laces rare!

Come and buy! Come and buy!
Taffta Hindi. Taffta Hindi.
Show us all you have today.
Come into the palace chamber.
Show your goods, don't go away!
Come into the palace chamber.
Show your goods, don't go away!

Come and buy! Come and buy!
Girls come from behind the curtains.
Come and see these lovely things.
He has all the latest fashions,
Silken robes and golden rings.
He has all the latest fashions.
Silken robes and golden rings.

Repeat verse 1.



6. CUCKOO - Austria

Children always love the lively folksong about a boy who lost his girlfriend to someone else. They should repeat this pattern throughout the song: slap knees, clap hands, snap fingers.

The word "cuckoo" should be sung once every time it appears in the first refrain, twice in the second chorus, and three times in the third refrain. Children should add additional snaps in the second and third choruses.

LYRIC

Oh I went to Peter's well.
And do you know what I heard?
From the murky swamp far away,
Called a lone cuckoo bird.

Chorus:

Heiliah, huldriah, huldriah. huldriah, cuckoo.
Huldriah, hihiah, huldriah, cuckoo.
Huldriah, hihiah, huldriah, cuckoo,
Huldriah, hihiah, Oh!

In the spring when the weather warmed
All the snow went away.
And my girl went and married
Leaving me in dismay.

Repeat Chorus

And since my girl's gone away
Tell me what do I do?
She took all my love with her
And my money too!

Repeat Chorus

7. SLEIGH BELLS - USSR

This spirited song utilizes the traditional Russian stringed instrument, the balalaika, and the Russian style of accelerating the tempo (speed) of the music. Younger children should join hands and circle in different directions faster or slower to the music. Older children can perform these typical Russian steps.

STEPS

A. 2 measures: Move forward with arms folded in front of the body. Step left, wiggle right heel in front, step right, and wiggle left heel in front. Repeat.

B. 2 measures: Slide to right with hands on hips for 6 counts, then stamp feet for three counts, left, right, left. Repeat to the left side.

C. Repeat as needed throughout the song. Finally, all join hands and move in a circle to the left, while looking over the right shoulder ending with a stamp forward and arms spread out.

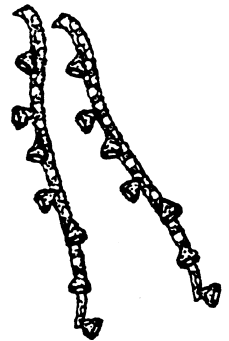
LYRIC

Sleigh bells ringing ting-a-lingle,
Toes and fingers freeze and tingle,
With our friends we laugh and mingle
In the falling snow.

Boys and girls come out together
Wearing coats of fur and leather
Made to stand the coldest weather
When the sleigh bells ring,

As we ride our song goes ringing.
Echoes thru the air go winging
Till the world seems full of singing
As we ride along.

Thru the town and by the river
Where the birches sigh and shiver,
And the birds their cries deliver
Joining in our song.



Repeat Verse 2; then repeat verse 1.

8. SHALOM ALEY'CHEM - Israel

The energetic hora is the traditional dance of Israel. Try this version with your children. The dancers form a circle with their hands on the shoulders of the dancers to their sides. For an interesting variation they can form 2 circles which move in opposite directions. Smaller groups can perform this in a line.

A. 1 measure: Step left, then cross the right foot behind the left.

B. 1 measure: Step left, then cross the right foot in front of the left. Continue this pattern throughout the song.

LYRIC

Hevenu shalom aley'chem.
Hevenu shalom aley'chem.
Hevenu shalom aley'chem,
Hevenu shalom, shalom, shalom aley'chem.

Repeat 3 times.

9. FUHNG YAHNG FLOWER DRUM SONG - China

Children can create a simple dragon out of a sheet or a length of material. They may draw the dragon head on front end of the material or create something more elaborate from papier mache or cardboard. To perform the dragon dance, they should form a single file line holding the dragon fabric up over their shoulders as they circle, snake, and move up and down to the music.

LYRIC

Sound the gong. Beat the drum.
Beat drum and sound gong,
Sing a song.
No other songs can we sing for you at all.
Only this one song, Fuhng Yahng song.

Chorus:

Fuhng, Fuhng Yahng song - ai, ai, ah.
 Drrr! Ling ding piow ee piow!
 Drrr! Ling ding piow ee piow!
 Drrr! Piow! Drrr! Piow! Drrr!
 Piow! Drrr! Piow! Piow! Yoo drrr!
 Piow! Piow! Piow! ee Piow!

I play a drum, I pLay a gong.
 With drum and gong we sing this song.
 No other tune do we know.
 We sing this Fuhng Yahng song as we go.

Repeat Chorus**10. SONG OF THE GURKHA BOYS - India**

Your children can use Indian style hand motions to imitate the action of the song. They also may shake bells to imitate the sound of Indian ankle bells.

Action words: strong, march, mountain steep and long, in step, carry loads, rocks, trees, pay, chant, rain falls, travel, heavy, no complaining, free, friendly mountains.

LYRIC

Gurkha boys are very strong,
 To Munsuhrt we march along.
 O'er the mountain steep and long,
 We keep in step with chant and song,
 Working as a group, you see,
 We carry loads thru rocks and trees.
 We do our best to earn our pay.
 We chant as we go on our way.

Chorus: (Chant)

Oh! Jug chahtokah, jug chahtokah, jug chahtokah jug.
 Jug chahtokah, jug chatokah jug chatokah jug.

Even if the rain falls down.
 We Curkhas travel to the town.
 Down the mountain trail we're coming.
 Gurkha porters so renowned.
 Heavy though the load we carry
 No complaining will you hear.
 We are the Gurkha boys so free.
 These friendly mountains we don't fear.

Repeat Chorus

We do our best to earn our pay,
 We chant as we go on our way.

Repeat chorus as needed.**11. WALTZING MATILDA - Australia**

"Waltzing Matilda" and Australia are identified so much together that it almost seems like the national anthem. Ask your children to mime the action words of the story during the verses. During the choruses, the students should join hands and circle right or left. Here's a brief dictionary to help you with the "outback" words that appear in the song.

Billabong - a water hole in a dried-up river bed.

Billy - a tin used as a kettle.

Coolibah - Eucalyptus tree.

Jumpback - sheep.

Swagman - a tramp carrying a swag, which is a bundle wrapped in a blanket.

Tucker - food.

Waltzing matilda - going on a trek carrying a bundle.

Action words: swagman, camped, billabong, coolibah tree, sang, billy boiled, waltzing matilda, jumbuck, drink, stowed, tucker bag, rode, thoroughbred, troopers, jumped, sprang, catch, ghost, heard.

LYRIC

Once a jolly swagman camped by a billabong
 Under the shade of a coolibah tree.
 And he sang as he watched and waited till his billy boiled.
 "You'll come a-waltzing matilda with me!"

Chorus:

Waltzing matilda, waltzing matilda.
 You'll come a-waltzing matilda with me.
 And he sang as he watched and waited till
 his billy boiled.
 "You'll come a-waltzing matilda with me!"

Down came a jumbuck to drink at the billabong.
 Up jumped the swagman and grabbed him with glee.
 And he sang as he stowed that jumbuck in his tucker bag.
 "You'll come a-waltzing matilda with me."

Chorus:

Waltzing matilda, waltzing matilda.
 You'll come a-waltzing matilda with me.
 And he sang as he stowed that jumbuck in his tucker bag.
 "You'll come a-waltzing matilda with me!"

Up rode the squatter, mounted on his thoroughbred.
 Down came the troopers, one, two, three.
 "Where's that jolly jumbuck you've got in your tucker bag?"
 "You'll come a-waltzing matilda with me."

Chorus:

Waltzing matilda, waltzing matilda,
 You'll come a-waltzing matilda with me.
 "Where's that jolly jumbuck you've got in your tucker
 bag?"
 "You'll come a-waltzing matilda with me!"

Up jumped the swagman, and sprang into the billabong.
 "You'll never catch me alive," said he.
 And his ghost may be heard as you pass by that billabong.
 "You'll come a-waltzing matilda with me."

Chorus:

Waltzing matilda, waltzing matilda,
 You'll come a-waltzing matilda with me.
 And his ghost may be heard as you pass by that billabong.
 "You'll come a-waltzing matilda with me!"

12. BONSOIR, MES AMIS - Canada

Position: Children form two lines with partners facing each other for a Canadian western dance. Repeat through song as needed.

- A. Measure 1: Bow to the person on the right.
- B. Measure 2: Bow to the person on the left
- C. Measure 3: Bow to your partner and join hands with partner.
- D. Measure 4: Circle around with partner back to original position.
- E. Measure 5 & 6: Wave to your partner.
- F. 8 measures: One at a time, partners join hands and gallop down between the 2 lines of people. Everyone else claps.

Chorus:

Bonsoir mes amis, bonsoir!
 Bonsoir mes amis, bonsoir!
 Bonsoir mes amis, bonsoir mes amis,
 Bonsoir mes amis, bonsoir
 Au revoir!

If we're all so good together.
 Tell me why we have to part?
 Tell me why, tell me why,
 Tell me why we have to part?

Repeat Chorus

Quand on est si bien ensemble.
 Pourquoi donc se separer?
 Pourquoi donc, pourquoi donc.
 Pourquoi donc se separer?

Repeat Chorus 2x.

