

Criss Cross Applesauce

This very short little song celebrates a magical piece of my own childhood. I was the youngest of four siblings, and shared a room with my brother (until I shared a room with my sister!). Although we had many sibling squabbles over territory, one of my fondest memories was taking turns drawing letters on each other's backs when we couldn't sleep. And what a great activity for building early literacy! I am now using in my school visits, and with my grandson. Adding the simple song expands the activity and lends a calmness and focus to it, especially when used in a group of children. If you are a parent or grandparent, it's also a very sweet activity to add to your getting-ready-for-bed rituals. We spend so much time teaching children how to "keep their hands to themselves," or "stay in their own space," that I think we can forget how comforting- and necessary touch is.

Criss, Cross, Applesauce

Criss cross, applesauce, tiptoe, tiptoe up your back
(lightly walk your fingers up a friend's back)

Criss cross, applesauce, tiptoe down again
(lightly walk your fingers back down)

Criss cross, applesauce, draw a letter on your back

Criss cross, applesauce, draw another letter

For teachers:

With children sitting in a circle, practice this activity with children "drawing" on the floor in front of them. Especially with younger children, you can hold up the picture of the letter you want them to draw. Older children can choose their own, and have then have their partner guess what letter it is. Do this a couple of times, and sing or play the downloaded song. Again, it will aid in focusing the group. Once children have done it a couple of times, you can have them turn sideways in the circle so every child has a back to draw on. And don't forget to put yourself in the circle! You will get a wonderful massage.

And another note for teachers: try this activity at a teacher's meeting. I have done it in teacher workshops, and everyone enjoys having a little "massage!"

I LOVE YOU