

# Nursey rhymes



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Nursery Rhymes Paper The essay aims to identify themes or messages from some Mother Goose nursery rhymes that seem to condone violence and abuse of children and women.

### Nursery Rhymes Paper

Child abuse and neglect have been forms of domestic violence that societies have tried to address since time immemorial. However, despite drastic and diverse measures, these types of violence continue to pervade contemporary societies. As proof, even nursery rhymes that parents read to children contain messages that condone child abuse and neglect. From among the Mother Goose Nursery Rhymes that contain clear messages that indicate accepting some form of child abuse are as follows:

There Was An Old Woman Who Lived In A Shoe

There was an old woman who lived in a shoe,  
She had so many children she didnt know what to do;  
She gave them some broth without any bread;  
She whipped them all soundly and put them to bed.

The highlighted phrases indicate forms of child abuse indicating that children were given insufficient food and nourishment and the use of corporal punishment through physical violence.

Another nursery rhyme that seemed to condone child abuse is Baa, Baa Black Sheep that manifests a little boy being neglected in terms of being accorded a full share of the wool, to wit:

Baa, Baa Black Sheep

Baa, baa black sheep, Have you any wool?

Yes sir, yes sir, Three bags full.

One for my master, One for my dame,

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But none for the little boy, Who cries in the lane.

Another nursery rhyme that is not very famous, yet delivered message of violence against women is: Peter, Peter, Pumpkin Eater which states -

Peter , Peter , pumpkin-eater, Had a wife and couldnt keep her;

He put her in a pumpkin shell, And there he kept her very well.

The message had revealed confining women to control and restraint, as if women were objects that could be confined in a defined location.

These are only a few of the nursery rhymes that have been written with utter disregard for significance in the content and the substance that the messages relayed. The writers would have thought that these were funny or common and accepted in their time frames. But domestic violence appeared to be manifested and expressed through literary works that have been targeted specifically for children. The connotation and intent could be to create the impression that naughty children should be punished and adults are then exempted from imposing violence through corporal punishment or negligence.

#### References

Enchanted Learning. (2010). Rebus Rhymes. Retrieved 31 July 2011.

Mother Goose and selected Nursery Rhymes. (N. D). Retrieved 31 July 2011.

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