**Hoot and Honk Dance Activity**

**By Connie Dow**

Hoot and Honk provides many opportunities for movement activities!

Bringing stories to life with music and dance can nurture early literacy and language skills, such as:

* Sequencing
* Making predictions
* Identifying with different characters
* Exploring the setting and background
* Vocabulary acquisition
* Listening skills

A dance story can be a very short activity (10 minutes or so), or can be expanded into a longer one. It can also be used as a fun presentation for parents and friends. Children enjoy revisiting the book, and through a parent or teacher's movement prompts and the children's own kinesthetic responses and ideas, the explorations that result can be energetic, playful, and enriching movement studies.

**Hoot and Honk Dance Story**

Materials:

Music (optional):

* 1.   Classical or New Age musical selection
* 2.   A livelier instrumental piece, such as Bluegrass, for the free dance at the end of the activity

A space large enough to move freely

**How to Present the Dance Story**

First read the book to your audience of children. Using any or all of the following prompts, guide the children through the movement ideas. Allow time between each prompt for the children to respond and follow where their imaginations lead them. If you have music, play the first selection softly in the background.

Movement Prompts:

Sway like the grasses in the picture on the first page. What else moves when the wind blows? Can you flap like a kite? Can you swish like blowing leaves? Can you bend like the trees in the story? Can you fly like a bird on a breeze?

A storm is coming! Clap your hands to make thunder. Can you make zigzag lightening shapes with your body? What would it feel like to be a cloud that fills up with water? You get so full that the water turns into rain and it begins to fall!

Imagine that you are a drop of water coming from the cloud. First you are a light raindrop. You are carried along by the wind, whirling and tossing up and down, and side to side. Now you are a big heavy drop, falling quickly to the ground with a big plop. Imagine that you make a big splash.

Imagine you are one of the little eggs from the story. The wind blows hard. You roll and tumble out of your nest into the soft grass.

Now that the storm is over, the mother owl and goose look for their lost eggs. Can you crawl through the tall grass and see if you can find it? Imagine you are the goose. Swim and waddle. Now fly and swoop like an owl. Look all around for your lost egg!

Imagine you are a tiny bird inside an egg. You have to wait until you are ready to hatch. When you are ready, take your little beak and begin to peck to get out. It is hard work! You have to peck until one wing can poke out.  Now peck some more, and try to push your other wing out. Now push your little feet to finally break free from the egg. Try walking around on your brand new legs. Try flapping your little wings! Open and close your beak!  What sound would a baby bird make? Now walk, flap, and chirp!

 Why is it hard for Hoot to sleep at night? He is wide-awake when mama goose and the goslings are sleeping. What does he do?  He can't close his eyes, and he listens to the night sounds. Open your eyes wide, be very still and quiet, and listen for sounds.

How do you feel when you are not sleepy? Do you feel fidgety? Let's fidget as much as we can. Fidget your face. Fidget your shoulders. Fidget your arms and hands. Fidget your legs, and your feet. Now fidget everything all at the same time!

Imagine that you are Hoot, with lots of energy when night comes.

Hoot goes exploring. Walk through the woods in the moonlight, through the fields, and up and down a hill. Suddenly, you see some other baby owls who are also awake! Go to them and look at them carefully. Then you look up, and see your owl mother! Give her a big owl hug. What would it feel like to go to sleep with the other baby owls, and be snuggled together safely in the nest?

Honk is in an owl nest!  What do owls eat?  Do you think a gosling would like to eat a mouse? What do you think baby geese would like to eat?

When the baby owls are wide-awake at night, Honk wants to sleep!  He gets up in the morning when the owls are sleeping. He goes exploring in the bright sunshine. Let's walk through the woods, through the fields, and up and down a hill. Look, there is a pond!  What does Honk do?  He sees some other goslings. Can you jump into the water, and use your little webbed feet to paddle around the pond? Swim to the other goslings. Dunk yourself upside down in the water – with your feet in the air! Swim around the pond, and dunk your head with your feet in the air a few more times.

This time, bring your head up, and see mama goose looking at you! Follow her home and cuddle up with her and the other babies. You are safe and snug in the nest.

Finish the story with a free dance to allow the children to further explore any parts of the story they wish. Play the livelier musical selection, and ask them to dance about their favorite parts of the story. Finish the dance by asking the children to freeze in the shape of an owl flying, or a gosling upside down in the pond.