Jumping Rope in Early Childhood

As spring blooms around us we are reminded of when we skipped, galloped, and ran as fast as we could to our meadow in the park. When we got there, we opened our backpacks, took out our jump ropes, and got to jumping.

Jumping rope is a much beloved activity for young children, and one that has been passed down over centuries. Valued as much for its simplicity as it is for its difficulty, jumping rope appears in its many forms in the histories of cultures all over the world. But why do we do it in our kindergartens? We can imagine that for the young child who has first mastered crawling, sitting, walking, running, and skipping, jumping presents an exciting and challenging new skill. Jumping strengthens the muscles in the legs, matures the sense of self-movement, and requires great stamina. In the Early Childhood classrooms, kindergarteners may first practice jumping rope with the rope on the ground so that they can master the act of jumping in place, with both legs together. To defy and overcome the force of gravity conveys a feeling of freedom. Children are

inspired by watching their friends who have already acquired the skill of jumping and will practice until they find their own rhythm.

Jumping rope is not only a joyful way to exercise the physical body- it also provides us with opportunities to introduce verses and rhymes to which the children move. Movement and language are practiced in unison and some verses even encourage the children to count or recite the alphabet

Here are two of our favorite verses in the Kindergarten:

Strawberry Shortcake
Strawberry shortcake, cream on top,
Tell me the name of your sweetheart,
Is is A, B, C,…

Bubble Gum
Bubble gum, bubble gum, in a dish
How many pieces do you wish?
1, 2, 3,…

The jumper can continue until they miss a jump, and then try again to see if they can get all the way to Z or count to "infinity". A wonderful activity for younger and older children alike, enjoy practicing jump rope at home or in your own corner of the park!