“Button You Must Wander”
From “120 Singing Games and Dances” by Lois Chocksy

Suggested Grade: 1st grade

Musical Concept Possibilities: Steady beat; quarter and eighth notes; same and different phrases (based on words, based on rhythm, based on melody); varying tempos (speed of song changes how fast students pass the button)

Classroom Connections: This song could be combined with books that feature buttons like Corduroy by Don Freeman. Vocabulary could also be discussed, especially the words and phrases “wander”, “sharp eyes” and “bright eyes.” Along with the words, students could discuss the meaning of the song. This song could also be used as a team-building or community developing exercise because students are working as a team to hide the button.

Objective: Students will sing and move to “Button You Must Wander” using circle game movements.

Process:
1. Teach “Button You Must Wander” through rote process.
   - First singing of whole song (Breana)
     ○ Job for students: Pat beat on legs
   - Phrases (alternating phrases), Laura first (phrase 1 & 3) and then Breana (phrase 2 & 4)
   - Second singing of whole song (Laura)
     ○ Job for students: Count phrases and identify which two are the same
   - Whole class singing together (Laura gives starting beat & pitch)
2. Dismiss students from seats to form a circle on the ground.
   - Students should have room for a person in the middle of the circle and be seated close enough to each other to pass a button to the person to their right
3. Explain directions of the game
   - One person will sit in the middle of the circle. This will be the guesser.
   - The people in the circle will be passing a button around the circle to the steady beat of the song we just learned.
   - The catch is that the people in the circle don’t want the person in the middle to know who has the button and the person in the center will not know who starts with the button.
   - The people in the circle have a few choices when they have the button. They can choose to pass it to the person to their right or to not pass the button. If they don’t pass the button, they must pretend to pass the button. Then the person on their right will pretend to pass the button. This will keep going until the song ends.
● When the song ends, the guesser will have two guesses to tell who has the button.
● The person who ended with the button becomes the new guesser.

4. Play a practice round of the game with one teacher as the guesser
● The teacher in the middle will shut their eyes before the song begins.
● The other teacher will give the button to the student whose birthday is closest, then cue students into singing the song.
● When the song starts, the teacher in the middle will open their eyes and start to figure out who has the button.

5. Play more rounds of the game with students.
● The student who had the button at the end of the practice round becomes the new guesser.
● Remind students to be sneaky during this game!

Extension Possibilities:
● Add small rhythm instruments (hand drum, rhythm sticks, etc.) as accompaniment for the steady beat
● Add bourdons or broken bourdons as accompaniment for the steady beat
● Once students know the game, the tempo of the song can be changed for different rounds. Students would show their understanding of tempo by adjusting how quickly or slowly they pass the button to match the steady beat