

Joins in with songs and rhymes.

Why rhymes and songs are so important in the early years.

Nursery rhymes and songs are wonderful! Not just because they are fun and engaging for young children, but because they can make a real difference to children's language and literacy. Research suggests that children who have a good understanding of rhyme do better in their literacy than children who have poor skills in this area.

Typical development

3 to 4 year olds will be learning to:	sing a large repertoire of songs. know many rhymes.
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Ideas for exploring rhythm and rhyme with young children.

- Choose a simple rhyme and use it to accompany one of your daily routines such as a walk to the playpark, craft activity or nappy changing time.
- Introduce 'Rhyme of the Week' and make a point of singing the rhyme 2 or 3 times each day. Most nursery rhymes take no more than 1 or 2 minutes.
- Encourage children to join in with nursery rhymes and songs with their own rhythms, singing, clapping or with musical instruments, from banging a drum to rattling some bells.
- Encourage children to copy your beats on a drum or shakes on a tambourine to practise basic rhythms.
- Count or sing as you go downstairs or carry out repetitive tasks e.g. as you build a tower or pour sand and water.
- Read lots of rhyming books and when children are familiar with them, leave a space for them to fill in the rhyming words. Talk about what other words might fit into the space that also rhyme.
- Once they are familiar with a rhyme, play around with the words e.g. 'twinkle twinkle little....bat, how I wonder where you're at!'
- Sing rhymes and songs that use the children's own names to encourage turn taking and engagement. Naming rhymes are great for children first getting to know one another.
- Make a collection of objects that rhyme – talk about how they are similar or different. Think about what other things could join this rhyming gang.
- Build in rhymes to everyday activities e.g. 'this is the way we wash our hands...put on our coats...eat our snack...'
- Develop displays and stories linked to familiar nursery rhymes such as 'hickory dickory dock...' or create your own 'Mary, Mary, quite contrary' garden area outdoors.
- Make up your own songs and rhymes for routines in your setting or other important things the children need to remember. The repetition and rhythm of rhymes can really help to make information stick.
- Put together a 'Rhyme Bag' for children to explore and fill it with rhyme related objects such as puppets, cookie cutters (Five Currant Buns), small world characters, a toy teapot and cup and saucer (Polly Put The Kettle On, I'm A Little Teapot) or rubber ducks (Five Little Ducks).
- Create a Flash Card of lyrics for lots of different nursery rhymes and encourage staff members within your setting to learn the rhymes and look for ways to introduce them.

Nursery Rhymes

<https://www.pacey.org.uk/news-and-views/pacey-blog/2019/october-2019/the-importance-of-nursery-rhymes-in-early-childhood/>

Look Say Sing Play Right from birth, every time you play with your baby, use silly voices, or even **sing**, you're not just bonding, you're building their brain. Sign up for brain-building tips.

<https://www.nspcc.org.uk/keeping-children-safe/support-for-parents/look-say-sing-play/>