

Joins in with songs and rhymes

Songs and rhymes are valuable tools for supporting children's communication and early literacy development. They help children learn new vocabulary, develop listening and attention skills, and build confidence in speaking and joining in with others. The repetition, rhythm, and rhyming patterns in songs and rhymes develop children's phonological awareness, an important foundation for later reading and writing. Children with a good awareness of rhyme are more likely to develop strong early literacy skills.

Practitioners can support children by:

- Embedding a wide range of songs, rhymes, and counting rhymes into daily routines and play, including transitions, tidying up, handwashing, and snack times.
- Introducing and revisiting a regular 'Rhyme of the Week' to build familiarity, confidence, and participation.
- Encouraging active engagement through singing, actions, movement, clapping, body percussion, simple instruments, and copying rhythms.
- Sharing a variety of rhyming books, songs, and stories, encouraging children to join in with repeated phrases, predict missing rhyming words, and explore alternative rhymes.
- Using songs and rhymes that include children's names to support engagement, turn-taking, and belonging.
- Providing opportunities to collect, sort, and discuss rhyming objects and words, drawing attention to similarities in sounds.
- Creating a rhyme-rich environment using displays, props, story sacks, rhyme bags, puppets, and role-play experiences linked to familiar rhymes.
- Ensuring all practitioners consistently model and use songs and rhymes throughout the day.
- Working in partnership with parents to share favourite songs and rhymes and encourage singing and rhyme activities at home.

Activities, Ideas, Resources and Strategies:

- Rhyme of the week
- Musical instruments and body percussion
- Rhyming books and poetry
- Name songs and turn-taking songs
- Action rhymes and finger rhymes
- Counting songs and nursery rhymes
- Outdoor rhyme trails and rhyme hunts