

Early Years Resources for Families

Songs and Rhymes



Singing to your child before they can speak helps them tune into language, and may avoid language problems developing in later life. Songs and rhymes aid a child's ability to think in words.

Repetition is very important to early brain development and songs and rhymes are particularly good for this. You may find your child wants to sing the same song over and over, try not to discourage this as it's helping to make lasting connections in their brain.

Activity ideas:

- **Just sing!** Any rhymes or songs suitable for children will do. You really don't have to be a good singer. Encourage your child to join in some actions or dance while singing along.
- **Make a song box.** See if you can find items which are related to songs and rhymes. For example:
 - watering can – Mary, Mary quite contrary
 - toy bus – Wheels on the bus
 - teddy – Round and round the garden
 - duck – Five little ducks or Old MacDonald had a farm



Put the items into a bag or box. Let your child put their hand in and pick out an item. Sing the related song together.

- Use a **song book with a CD**. Alternatively, have a look on YouTube for songs and rhymes. A good place to start is by searching 'Mr Tumble Nursery Rhymes'.
- If you really don't like to sing, try **emphasising the rhythm and doing actions**:
 - “Roly poly up up up! (Roll hands above your head.)
 - Roly poly down down down! (Roll hands down to your toes.)
 - Roly poly clap clap clap, (clap three times.)
 - Roly poly HANDS BEHIND YOUR BACK!” (Encourage child to shout this last bit.)
- **Record singing together.** Children love to hear themselves – and you.
- Songs that **include your child's name** are great fun and they love to join in. For example, if you know the song 'Peter pointer', you can substitute the child's name – “Harry Smith, Harry Smith where are you?”
Child replies or sings “Here I am. Here I am. How do you do?”
Try suggesting your child hides first and it becomes a peek-a-boo game too.
- Try **songs with instructions**. For example “Here we go round the mulberry bush”, “This is the way we brush our teeth; put on our shoes” etc.