

Especially for parents of infants!

Prime Time Nursery Rhymes

Rhymes and Sound Awareness

Here are some nursery rhymes that are likely to be especially fun and entertaining for your child. They are one way that infants learn about sounds, words, and simple stories.

What is the practice?

Nursery rhymes are simple, repetitive poems you can say or sing to your young child. They can be especially fun and enjoyable parent-child activities. Rhyming games help infants pay attention to sounds. They provide opportunities for your child to “ask for more” and to become familiar with sounds and words.



What does the practice look like?

The best nursery rhymes are ones that include some type of movement or some type of touching. Your child will learn how different sounds, words, and things go together as part of a nursery rhyme. Imagine a parent reciting the words to “Baby’s Name.” While being tickled and touched, the baby listens to every sound and watches every movement. You can just see why nursery rhymes are so much fun!

How do you do the practice?

Nursery rhymes are not only fun and enjoyable; they have an important purpose. These parent-infant games help your child be an active partner in listening to, doing, and saying the nursery rhyme. Try different rhymes to find ones that your child especially enjoys.

Dancing Fingers

Fingers are up, (*Wiggle fingers, pointing up.*)
Fingers are down. (*Wiggle fingers, pointing down.*)
Fingers are dancing, (*Make fingers appear to dance.*)
All over town. (*Run dancing fingers on the child’s tummy.*)

Blow, Wind, Blow

See the trees move (*Move your arm back and forth.*)
To and fro.
See the trees move
Blow wind, blow. (*Gently blow on child’s tummy or face.*)

Make Baby Smile

I can make baby smile. (*Gently touch the child’s mouth.*)
By tickling her toes, (*Tickle the child’s feet.*)
I can make baby smile (*Gently touch the child’s mouth.*)
By kissing her on the nose! (*Kiss the child on his or her nose.*)

Baby’s Name

What is your name? (*Point to the child.*)
I just want to know. (*Point to yourself.*)
Your name is _____. (*Say the infant’s name.*)
Hello, hello, hello! (*Wave to the child.*)

Blow Me A Kiss

Tell me you love me, (*Cross your heart.*)
And blow me a kiss. (*Blow the child a kiss.*)
Aim good and straight (*Gently place the
child’s hand on his or her mouth.*)
So you don’t miss. (*Pretend to catch
the kiss.*)

How do you know the practice worked?

- Does your child try to make any of the nursery rhyme movements?
- Does your child show signs that she knows what is about to happen?
- Does your child make sounds while playing the games?

Take a look at more fun with nursery rhymes

Do It Again!

Three-month-old Charlene is lying stretched-out on her back on her mother's legs looking up at her. Mom starts what has become a familiar game between her and her daughter. She says, "Can you smile for me? I can make Charlene smile by tickling her toes. I can make Charlene smile by kissing her nose!" Charlene has learned to lift her leg to have her toes tickled. She starts to blink her eyes, knowing her mom is about to kiss her nose. Mom asks, "Do you want to play again?" Charlene squeals and gets excited to tell her mom to "do it again!"



Meal Time Sing-Along



Nine-month-old Jilly is sitting in her highchair while her mother fixes her something to eat. Mom and Jilly have turned this everyday routine into a kind of sing-along. Mom starts by saying, "It's time to eat (pointing to her mouth while making the sign for eat). Let's get ready. It's time to eat! (pointing to Jilly's mouth while making the sign for eat). You'll feel so happy (while smiling to Jilly)." Jilly tries to continue the game by putting her hand up to her mouth. Her mother repeats the made-up nursery rhyme. Jilly touches her mother's mouth and then her own. The more they play, the more excited Jilly gets. She clearly shows delight in playing the game.

Dancing Fingers

Seven-month-old Josué is barely able to lift his hands or arms because of a rare muscular condition. His mother has figured out how to entertain her son with nursery rhymes. She plays "Dancing Fingers" with him. She holds Josué's arms up and uses her fingers to move his fingers. He shows he enjoys this game by looking at his mother's face. He even tries to get his mother to continue the game by making sounds and by getting excited. His mother has noticed that Josué is trying as hard as he can to move his fingers on his own. Mom repeats the nursery rhyme whenever he does this.

