

The Importance of Rhyme, Rhythm, Songs and Music for Literacy

And How Click IT! Can Help Your Child

A tremendous sense of fun, enjoyment, togetherness and relaxation is experienced during our singing times at Click IT! which has a very positive effect on the children that we work with.

We introduce rhymes and rhythm activities into every one of our weekly lessons whether this is a specific activity or just singing along to a nursery rhyme at the end of the lesson! As well as being great fun, nursery rhymes, songs and stories have a lot more to offer than just entertainment value.

Nursery rhymes have been around for a very long time. I remember enjoying them myself when I was a little girl and found great pleasure in singing and reciting them together with my own children.

Do you remember:

Jack and Jill went up the hill.

Humpty Dumpty sat on a wall.

Baa, baa, black sheep, have you any wool?

All those nonsensical verses from your childhood really do matter. They matter, because they rhyme. Not only is rhyming fun; it's a very important part of reading success.

Why is rhyming important?

Recent research has conclusively shown that rhythm and rhyme plays a hugely important role in developing early literacy skills. Children who enjoy music, singing and rhyming on a regular basis tend to learn to speak more



easily. They have more words to express themselves. They are more confident and creative and reading and spelling are easier to learn. It gives them a love of language.



Yes, sir, yes, sir, three bags full.

And this love of language, of books, of singing and rhyming will form a solid foundation for future learning.

How does it work?:

Rhymes help us to learn to play with words. They tune our ears to all the individual units of sound, called phonemes, which make up words. By hearing these different sounds children will learn how the sounds combine and blend together to form a word. If they can learn the sounds they can learn how to play with them, how to change them and most importantly, learn to recognise what sounds can be paired with other sounds.

Not only that, children love rhyme, rhythm and repetition. Nursery rhymes are often short and have lots of repetition which gives children the chance to hear sounds over and over again. By listening to words a second and third time this helps them to remember what they have just heard.

Learning to keep a steady beat

As well as singing and chanting, music and rhymes also help children to learn a steady beat. Research has shown that children who can keep a steady



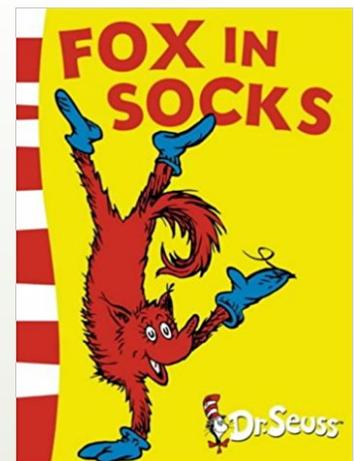
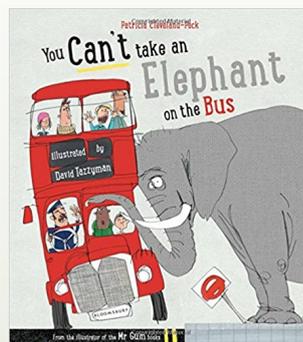
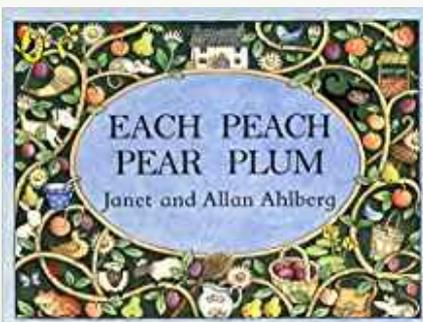
beat are naturally better readers but this is also fundamental to many other life skills which involve rhythm such as walking, swimming, writing and painting. Next term at Click IT! the children will be using an interactive musical keyboard to experiment with many different musical instruments such as the clarinet, guitar, banjo, piano and harp. They will be listening to different sound qualities (timbre), making their own musical compositions and can even add a backing rhythm to their music. This is a great activity to practice clapping, tapping and even dancing! They will also enjoy 'Let's Dance' where they will be creating dance sequences to music. When rhythm and movement are combined, the brain is very stimulated and your child is likely to remember both the movement and the rhyme more efficiently and effectively.

How to help your child at home...

- **Singing, rhyming and story-telling are oral activities that can be done anytime and any place, in the bath, on a walk, on a car journey, around the dining table.**
- Make up silly little songs and rhymes as you go along. Do actions to go along with the songs and if you don't know any, just make them up!
- **Play games when you are out and about such as 'I-spy'.**
- When saying nursery rhymes, if you can, ask your child to face you. The eye contact will help your child develop their non-verbal communication skills.
- **Children love imitating so you may notice your child making faces trying to copy you and the way your lips form words. Speak slowly and clearly and give your child a chance to join in too.**
- Encourage your child to make their own strings of rhymes during word play e.g. cat/ fat/ mat/ sat/ hat/ bat/ that.
- **Put together a collection of objects that rhyme and find the matching pairs! Throw in some words that don't rhyme.**
- Read books from the library which have rhyming text, encouraging your child to retell these by memory or to finish off the rhyming words before you read them.
- **Play fun word games such as making strings of rhyming words that all sound like "pig". They will find it hilarious when they get to a silly, nonsense word!**
- Clap/ pat/ stamp along to music with a steady beat, tapping out the rhythm of a song or even a story. You could even use chop-sticks or wooden spoons to tap out rhythms in words and songs in music, books and rhymes.

50 of the Best Rhyming Books for Children:

<https://theimaginationtree.com/the-best-rhyming-books-for-kids/>



Sources:

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Nursery World Magazine
The Daily Record
The Guardian
Sound Connections
justifyingplaybased.weebly.com