



Quality ChildCare

For Registered Home-Based Providers

LEARNING TO GROW ★ WINDWARD COMMUNITY COLLEGE

Vol. X, No. 6

10 Hallmarks of Quality Child Care

- ★ Build trusting relationships
- ★ Provide consistent care
- ★ Support children's health
- ★ Provide a safe environment
- ★ Provide positive guidance
- ★ Provide a language-rich environment
- ★ Foster curiosity and development through play
- ★ Individualize care and learning activities
- ★ Partner with parents
- ★ Pursue personal and professional growth

This Month's Hallmark of Quality Child Care Provide a Language-rich Environment

Hickory Dickory Dock: Nursery Rhymes Rock! (R.O.C.)

Nursery rhymes are short poems or chants that typically have rhyming words. Some of these include action rhymes, which are nursery rhymes with movement. You are probably familiar with at least a few of them, such as *Humpty Dumpty*, *Jack and Jill*, and *Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star*. It turns out that nursery rhymes are incredibly powerful influencers in young children's development. Research has shown that when parents and caregivers sing and recite nursery rhymes to children, they gain strong foundational skills for learning – beginning in infancy.

In fact, researchers at the University of Cambridge recently studied the brain activity of infants while they listened to nursery rhymes, and found that sing-song speech, like the rhythmic speech of nursery rhymes, is effective in helping the infant brain process speech, and could be crucial in learning language.

Numerous other studies confirm that introducing children to nursery rhymes during the early years is related to later literacy-related abilities, such as future reading success. Research has also shown that our brain has an easier time learning and storing information that rhyme. This makes nursery rhymes an excellent way to support young children's development!

In this newsletter, we'll expand on the following three important skills that children learn when they hear and recite nursery rhymes. (Think "*Nursery rhymes rock*" (R.O.C.):

- **R** – Reading Success
- **O** – Ordering/Story Sequencing
- **C** – Cognitive (Thinking) Skills

In addition, we will present fun and engaging nursery rhyme activities you can do with children at each age level – infants, toddlers and preschoolers – to help them gain these important foundational skills.



R–Reading Success

The rhyme and rhythm of nursery rhymes train young children’s brains to pay attention to the individual sounds and syllables in words. This is called phonemic awareness, and recent studies have shown that phonemic awareness appears to be the best single predictor of a child’s future reading success.

Here are some ideas for using nursery rhymes to lay the foundation for reading success:

- **Infants:** Recite simple nursery rhymes to the children throughout the day– while changing diapers, going for a walk, etc.
- **Toddlers:** Emphasize the rhyming words by saying them louder than the other words. For familiar nursery rhymes, pause before the rhyming words to have the child fill them in (e.g., you say, “One, two, buckle my ___” (child says “shoe”). You can also use props such as a plastic bowl and a wooden spoon to beat to the rhythm of nursery rhymes.
- **Preschoolers:** Change up the rhyming words in nursery rhymes to see if the children notice. (For example, you can say, *Humpty Dumpty sat on a wall, Humpty Dumpty had a great ball* (instead of fall). You can also give children opportunities to make up rhyming words (even nonsense ones) when reciting nursery rhymes, such as *Ants Go Marching*. (e.g., “*The ants go marching two by two, the little one stopped to___*” (child completes the line with a rhyming word: tie his shoe, say boo, etc.)



O–Ordering/Story Sequencing

Many nursery rhymes have a simple and clear beginning, middle and end (for example, *Little Miss Muffet* first sat and ate, then saw a spider, and last ran away). This teaches children that events happen in a sequence, and they begin to learn how to arrange information, language, and actions in the correct order.

Here are some ideas for using nursery rhymes to help build ordering/story sequencing skills:

- **Infants:** Recite nursery rhymes that have a simple sequence of events, such as *Itsy-Bitsy Spider*. You can further reinforce the story sequencing by performing the motions/body movements in order while carrying an infant (e.g., *Teddy Bear, Teddy Bear*).
- **Toddlers:** Teach nursery rhymes with motions that emphasize the simple order of actions, such as ‘fly away’, then ‘come back,’ as in *Two Little Black Birds*.
- **Preschoolers:** Use pictures of objects in a nursery rhyme (e.g., for *Little Miss Muffet* you might have pictures of: a girl on a stool, a bowl and spoon, a spider, a girl running away). Ask the child, “What happened first...next...and last?” Encourage her to place the pictures in the correct order. You can also use storytelling stones to have her retell the nursery rhymes.

C–Cognitive (Thinking) Skills

Studies have shown that exposing young children to nursery rhymes stimulate and strengthen the neural pathways in their brain – improving overall cognitive functions. The simple, repetitive, predictable patterns of nursery rhymes increase children’s memory, attention span, and comprehension skills. Another benefit is that nursery rhymes expand children’s imagination!

Here are some ideas for using nursery rhymes to help build cognitive skills:

- **Infants:** Repeat the same nursery rhymes over again. Choose rhymes with a simple, steady beat and lots of repetitive language, such as BINGO, and *Head and Shoulders*.
- **Toddlers:** Relate the nursery rhymes to what is around the children by pointing out objects around the house while singing (e.g., a teapot). You can engage them further by saying the child’s name and using props or hand and body movements to act out nursery rhymes. For example, for *Jack be Nimble*, say “(Leah) be nimble, (Leah) be quick, (Leah) jump over the candle stick!” (while she jumps over an unlit candle lying on the ground).



- **Preschoolers:** Provide props for children to act out nursery rhymes (such as cat ears and mittens for *Three Little Kittens*.) Flannel pieces and puppets also work great. You can also recite nursery rhymes in other languages or from other cultures, or replace some words with words from another language. After reciting a nursery rhyme to the children, ask them questions to help them make connections to their own life. For example, you might ask “Have you seen wool before?” (after reciting *Baa Baa Black Sheep*).

Resources

For more information on nursery rhyme, check out these resources:

The Complete Book of Rhymes, Songs, Poems, Fingerplays and Chants by Jackie Silber and Pam Schiller

Rhymers are Readers: The Importance of Nursery Rhymes

<https://www.noblesvilleschools.org/site/handlers/filedownload.ashx?moduleinstanceid=4380&dataid=4576&FileName=2%20Rhymers%20are%20Readers-Why%20Important.pdf>

Training Opportunity

Let’s Give Them Something to Talk About! Supporting Oral Language Development in the Early Childhood Classroom

Oral language is the foundation of literacy. In this webinar recording, Dr. Jean presents attention-getting ideas for using fingerplays, nursery rhymes, songs, and stories with young children! This online training offers a certificate for training hours.

<https://home.edweb.net/webinar/lets-give-them-something-to-talk-about-supporting-oral-language-development-in-the-early-childhood-classroom/>

Featured Activity

Hey Diddle Diddle Storytelling Stones



What You Need:

- River rocks or smooth flat stones
- Mod Podge (a mixture of glue and water works too, if you don't have Mod Podge)
- Paint brush
- Pictures (the size of the stones) to go along with the nursery rhyme (e.g., a cat and a fiddle, a cow jumping over a moon, a dog laughing, and a dish and a spoon). You can usually find and print them from the internet.

What to Do:

1. Glue each picture to a stone using the Mod Podge (or watered glue).
2. Brush Mod Podge over the pictures to the edge of the stones so it creates a smooth shiny surface. Let it dry completely.
3. Have the children use the story stones by lining them up in order to retell *Hey Diddle Diddle*.



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Suggested Books

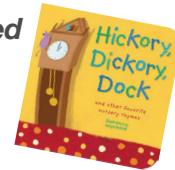
Discover these books and more at the Hawai'i State Public Library www.librarieshawaii.org

Infants and Toddlers

Hickory Dickory Dock and Other Favorite Nursery Rhymes Illustrated

by Genine Delahaye

Children will delight in this board book of classic nursery rhymes, whimsically illustrated with adorable animal characters. Sing along with action rhymes like Pat-a-Cake and I'm a Little Teapot.



Eric Carle's Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star and Other Nursery Rhymes

by Eric Carle

This sturdy lift-the-flap book is perfect for little hands! Includes 5 classic nursery rhymes with Eric Carle's signature illustrations.

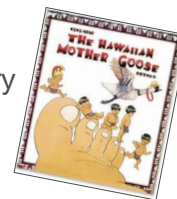


Preschoolers

The Hawaiian Mother Goose Rhymes

9-by Debra Ryll

This book features classic nursery rhymes with a local twist. Little Miss Muffet who sat on a tuffet becomes Little Miss Aku who sat on a pohaku (rock), and much more.



Mary Engelbreit's Mother Goose: One Hundred Best Loved Verses

by Mary Engelbreit

This highly illustrated hardcover treasury includes everyone's favorite time-honored characters—Little Bo-Peep, Humpty Dumpty, Old King Cole, Jack and Jill, and many, many more.



Citations

University of Cambridge. Why Reading Nursery Rhymes and Singing to Babies May Help Them to Learn Language. *ScienceDaily*. ScienceDaily, 1 December 2023. www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2023/12/231201123644.htm.

Harper, L. J. (2011). Nursery Rhyme Knowledge and Phonological Awareness in Preschool Children. *Journal of Language and Literacy Education*, 7(1), 65-78. Available at http://jolle.coe.uga.edu/wp-content/uploads/2013/03/7_1_5_harper.pdf

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