



The Importance of Rhythm and Rhyme



For hundreds of years, parents and caregivers all over the world have recited and sung rhymes to young children. Some Mother Goose rhymes go back more than 300 years! One reason they continue to be popular is that they are fun, full of nonsense and easy to remember.

Don't worry about trying to make sense of nursery rhymes—that's why they're called nonsense. Just listen to the rhymes. Play with the sounds of the words. Make funny voices. Be silly! And be prepared to repeat favorite rhymes over and over and over!

Even though it's fun to say and sing nursery rhymes, you are also giving your child valuable language experience. Playing with sounds and rhymes helps children start to figure out how language works. Your child will learn new words and images and this will help her develop communication skills. By connecting pictures with rhymes, your child will begin to see how books work.

So, while you and your child are having a lot of fun, she is learning a great deal, too!

One way to make the rhymes especially fun is to memorize several of your favorites and say or sing them during the day. For example, while you're setting the breakfast table you might say the rhyme to "Pease Porridge Hot." Or you can sing the words to *Baby Dance* while you and your child dance around the living room. Or you can act out *Mary Had a Little Lamb* with a stuffed animal.

Remember the name game? Take your child's name and add funny endings to it. Let's say your child's name is Sandy. The song goes: *Sandy Sandy bobandi. Banana fana fofandi. Me my momandi. Sandy.*

If Sandy's best friend is Juan, you could make the song up for Juan too. The song would go: *Juan Juan bobaun. Banana fana fofaun. Me my momaun. Juan.*

You can make up silly rhymes for other family members, friends and even stuffed animals!